

Roth Conversion Checklist

A practical checklist to help you think through whether a Roth conversion fits your plan and how to avoid common surprises.

1) Clarify the Goal

■	I can explain why I'm considering a conversion (future tax flexibility, RMD planning, legacy goals, etc.).
■	I understand a conversion increases taxable income in the year it happens.
■	I know I'm not converting based on headlines or fear—this decision fits my plan.

2) Understand the Tax Impact

■	I've estimated my current-year taxable income before any conversion.
■	I know what tax bracket I'm in and where the next bracket begins.
■	I've decided how much income I'm willing to add this year (a "bracket cap").
■	I've considered whether state income taxes apply.

3) Medicare, IRMAA, and Other Income-Based Items

■	If I'm on Medicare (or soon will be), I've checked whether a conversion could trigger IRMAA surcharges.
■	I understand IRMAA is based on income from two years prior.
■	I've considered whether a conversion could affect any income-based credits, subsidies, or taxes in my situation.

4) How Will the Taxes Be Paid?

■	I have a plan to pay the conversion taxes (ideally from cash/taxable savings, not from the IRA).
■	If I'm under age 59½, I understand potential penalties if taxes are withheld from the IRA distribution.
■	I've considered whether estimated tax payments or withholding adjustments are needed to avoid underpayment penalties.

5) Timing and Strategy

■	I've identified the best window for my plan (early retirement years, before Social Security, before RMDs, etc.).
■	I understand conversions can be done over multiple years instead of all at once.
■	I've considered market timing from a risk standpoint (converting after a drop may convert more shares for the same tax).

6) Execution and Follow-Through

■	I know which accounts are being converted (Traditional IRA, rollover IRA, old 401(k) rollover, etc.).
■	I've confirmed the Roth IRA is open and ready to receive the conversion.
■	I understand the paperwork I should receive (Form 1099-R and Form 5498).
■	I have a plan to update my withholding/estimates and revisit the plan next year.

Reminder: Roth conversions are not one-size-fits-all. The right approach depends on your taxes, Medicare timing, income needs, and goals.

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